Frequently Asked Questions – OFCY Release of Information

Introduction
These FAQs are intended to inform Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) funded programs and their clients about the required Release of Information that each participant in your OFCY funded programs are required to have on file.

All providers are required to make their best effort to secure consent from participants enrolled in their OFCY-funded programs. These FAQs are not intended for use as a participant hand-out, but as a tool for providers in their conversations with participants. For more guidelines for providers on how to administer the consent form, please see the "Consent Administration Protocol."

Providers who have questions about these FAQs or the consent form in general can contact their assigned grant manager or Scott Kim, OFCY Program Analyst, at sskim@oaklandca.gov.

FAQ: Why must OFCY Grantees implement this Release of Information?
This Release of Information is a requirement of OFCY for all programs receiving OFCY funds. This requirement is referenced in numerous places including the 2019-2022 Request for Proposal, OFCY Grant Contract, OFCY Grantee Manual, OFCY Cityspan Manual, in Cityspan when creating participants and is a part of OFCY Program Monitoring.

The Release of Information also protects the privacy of clients who do not wish to be entered and tracked in Cityspan or participate in evaluation surveys.

FAQ: What are clients consenting to when they sign the Release of Information?
By signing the Release of Information, clients or their parents/caregivers are agreeing to:

- Have their or their child(ren)'s demographics information entered into Cityspan. The required fields for creating OFCY participants in Cityspan are: first name, last name, date of birth, residential zip code, race/ethnicity and gender identity.
- Have their or their child(ren)'s participation entered in Cityspan through attendance being entered in Cityspan.
- Have their child(ren) age 8+ participate in completing evaluation surveys.

FAQ: What is Cityspan? What client information will be entered into Cityspan?
Cityspan is the online content management system that each OFCY funded program is required to use to set Scope of Work benchmarks and submit quarterly progress reports. In order to measure performance and progress toward service goals, OFCY funded programs need to create program participants and track attendance in Cityspan.

FAQ: Who has access to client information?
Only the OFCY funded organization can see all the information that they input into Cityspan including full first and last names. OFCY staff cannot see full names. OFCY evaluators may see full first and last names for determining if the same person is participating in multiple OFCY funded programs.

OFCY staff and its independent evaluators can run administrative reports to see total number of participants by age, race/ethnicity, gender, and residential zip code within a program and across programs.

FAQ: What client data will be used by the evaluators?
The evaluators will use basic demographic information such as age (calculated by date of birth), gender identity, race/ethnicity and zip code. They will review and report on information such as participation and types of services provided.

FAQ: Why does there need to be an evaluation? How will this information be used?
OFCY is required by legislation to submit annual independent evaluation reports to the City Council. These reports inform City Council and Oakland residents on how public funds are being used and its impact on Oakland's children and youth. The evaluation also provides feedback to specific OFCY funded programs on how they are performing. Past OFCY evaluation reports can be found at http://www.ofcy.org/evaluation/.

FAQ: Where is the information stored?
Cityspan is a secure, password-protected online database designed to protect individual client information. OFCY funded programs also have a paper file that should be kept in a locked drawer. Clients can request to see their information in Cityspan at any time. Evaluators also protect the data files they received from Cityspan with passwords and physically store the files in secured areas of their office.

FAQ: Will client names ever be used?
Only the OFCY funded program can see full first names and last names entered. They will use your or your child(ren)'s name in the database so that they can keep track of your or your child(ren)'s participation. Practically this means tracking attendance in OFCY funded services.

OFCY staff cannot see full first names and last names but can see first and last initials. The evaluator will NEVER share your name or personal information in reports and presentations.

FAQ: How is the information useful if client name is not used?
The evaluator helps OFCY and its funded programs see how things are going overall, not specifically for the individual client. For example, they may write a report that says "This program served 100 youth and 80% of them feel safe and supported." This helps tell the story of what this program does and how it is received by clients. Knowing that these programs make a difference also helps keep the funding going.

FAQ: If youth participants and their families are undocumented, will this put them at risk?
OFCY funded programs do not track legal status of any participants in Cityspan. Specific addresses are also not required to be entered in Cityspan.

FAQ: What happens if the client does not sign the Release if Information?
If a client does not sign, they can still receive services but the OFCY funded program cannot count these clients or service hours towards self-determined benchmarks. This may impact program performance numbers. In order for the OFCY funded program to count clients and their participation against the projected numbers of unduplicated participants and service hours they proposed, clients must sign this release of information.

FAQ: Can a client take back consent? How long does consent last?

Yes, clients can take back consent at any time. OFCY cannot undo things that have already happened if client information has already been included in an evaluation. But OFCY can make that client is not part of any future evaluation reports.

The consent does not have an end-date and is good for as long as the client participates in the OFCY funded program. As a matter of best practice, programs should revisit the consent with clients if they leave the program and return at a later date.

FAQ: Do you have the form in different languages?

Yes, we have the forms in English, Spanish and Chinese. They can be found at http://www.ofcy.org/grant-policies/. For children and youth under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign on their behalf. For older youth participant aged 18, 19 and 20, they can sign themselves. Adult participants being served through early childhood programs must also sign release of information.